

Mentor trash pickup could get cheaper

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The city of Mentor and its residents stand to save on waste hauling costs in the coming years, based on a contract before City Council tonight.

Waste Management of Ohio Inc. was the low bidder for collection of residential solid waste, recycling and yard waste. Terms of the five-year agreement translate to a 19 percent to 32 percent overall savings on residents' monthly bills.

Those currently recycling — about 4,000 households — would see the latter savings. The monthly cost with optional recycling will drop \$3.55 to \$7.65 in 2012, and will cost \$8.27 a month by 2016. Everyone will receive a recycling cart and be billed the same amount, whether or not they opt to participate.

"The significant departure from a service perspective is moving toward a citywide curbside recycling program," City Manager Ken Filipiak said. "The current bids offer

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us an opportunity to improve the level of service offered to our residents and still lower their present costs. ... Rates in the final year of the agreement are still well below current rates."

The Waste Management bid also represents big savings to the city, Filipiak said. With a return to a curbside recycling program — once subsidized by the Lake County Solid Waste Management District — the administration proposes closing the existing drop-off site, at a savings of about \$100,000 annually.

An additional \$170,000 a year would be saved by no longer subsidizing the existing voluntary recycling program.

The lower basic service rate will net about a \$300,000 annual savings, for a total cost reduction approaching \$600,000, officials said.

The centralized drop-off site receives heavy use and,

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therefore, interest is anticipated in curbside recycling, Public Works Director Matt Schweikert said.

He noted that the lower basic service rate likely is because of increased competition — five total bidders this year rather than the usual two

— and going to a cart system for recycling collection, which allows for a more efficient, automated system.

Waste Management would provide a 64-gallon, recyclables-only rolling container to each household. It would be marked differently than a waste can and include instructions on materials to be collected. The capacity is nearly four times the existing 18-gal-

lon containers. The company would communicate the change to all households and coordinate container drop-off.

The city pays half the cost of residents' basic garbage service and 100 percent of yard waste collection, and residents pay for all of bulk pickup. They would pay for all of recycling costs under the new agreement.